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COOPERATIVE FRUIT MARKETING

Excerpts from 1922 Annual Reports  
of State and County  
Extension Agents.

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Brief No. 8

Compiled by the Reports Section

July, 1923.

U. S. Department of Agriculture  
and State Agricultural College  
Cooperating  
Extension Service, Office of  
Cooperation in Extension Work  
Washington, D. C.

COOPERATIVE WORK ALIENS

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plainly and measures have been taken to correct the fault. Because of this being the first attempt at packing, the cost of such operation was unduly high (46 cents per crate), but it is believed that experience was gained that will enable the association management to cut its cost materially another year. The general market conditions existing during the grape-shipping period were, as is generally known, very poor, but the association was able to get \$47.50 per ton for its shippers' grapes delivered at the packing shed. Considering all conditions, this price is quite satisfactory, and will be the means of stimulating production considerably.- E. S. Turville, County Agent, Casa Grande, Pinal County.

### California

Fruit shipment figures are not yet complete, but indications are that over 70,000 boxes of fresh fruits, or approximately 120 cars, were shipped from Nevada County this year. An industry of such dimensions in a county with such limited development is worthy of considerable attention, particularly when every condition favors the expansion of the industry. Out of a total of 18 projects carried on, 9 are bearing on fruit growing.- H. I. Graser, County Agent, Grass Valley, Nevada County.

The outcome of some agitation was the organization of the Tehama County Fruit Growers' Association. This is a non-stock, non-profit organization of growers for the purpose of marketing green fruit. The principal activities of the association for 1922 were the shipping of fresh apricots, plums, and peaches. The shipment of apricots and plums was made by express while the peaches were sent out in carload quantities. The association is linked with the California Fruit Exchange, which took charge of the actual marketing. The apricot shipment proved to be very satisfactory but the peach shipment was not so satisfactory. Several factors entered into the poorer returns for peach shipment, the principal causes being: first, an abnormally late season with peaches ripening for shipment about two or three weeks later than usual; second, a large crop of peaches in other sections of the United States which came into direct competition with the California fruit; third, the shortage of cars at shipping time due to the railroad strike. A total of 5,398 crates of peaches was handled through this association, or about six carloads. The amount of apricot shipments is not known. The gross value of peaches shipped was \$11,555.26; of apricots, 792.09; and of pears, \$377.89. In spite of rather poor results the first year the association is planning to expand its activities in 1923.- E. W. Curtis, County Agent, Red Bluff, Tehama County.

### Georgia

We have in this county the Consolidated Apple Growers' Exchange, an organization of apple growers. It is a cooperative organization and has been operating for two years. On beginning work in the county I started some work in cooperation with this organization in the harvesting and handling of apples. With most of the growers there was a tendency to pick the fruit too green. In many of the orchards demonstrations in picking and handling of fruit were given. As a result of this work some of the growers were able to get from 25 to 50 cents more per box for their fruit, due to its increased size, its



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### Arizona

The Pinal County Fruit Growers' Association was organized last spring and undertook the marketing of grapes and deciduous fruits. In the matter of deciduous fruits, the supply was hardly more than the local demand, so the volume of business done was not large; but for the first time it brought to the attention of growers the real status of the quality of their fruit upon the market and set on foot an investigation of the causes for the lack of quality. Measures will be taken to overcome the faults found to exist. The supply of grapes this year was sufficient to allow shipments in carload lots for the first time. Four carloads were shipped to eastern markets and about one-half a carload was shipped to nearby points by local express. The grapes were brought to a local packing house and were sorted, graded, and packed in crates and marketed with the association brand, "the Cow Boy." Here too the deficiency in quality of the local product was brought out

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\* No attempt is made to cite all references to cooperative fruit marketing in this circular. Only selected extracts showing typical methods employed and results secured in a number of States are included. Owing to the difference in terminology used in the various States and to other local conditions the information contained herein should be reviewed by the State subject-matter specialist concerned before incorporating any part of it in the extension plans for the State.



heightened color, and the fact that it was picked at the right time.- T. L. Asbury, District Agent, Augusta.

The crop of huckleberries was good in Haralson County this year and farmers were in need of money at that season. For a number of years berries have been shipped from this county, but people did not seem to realize the value of the crop. I, therefore, prepared a circular letter giving instructions on gathering the berries and sent a copy to every farmer in the county whose name and address I could get. I then saw the merchants who heretofore had handled the berries, told them what I had done, and arranged for them to buy the berries when brought in, and to make preparations for caring for many more than they had ever before handled. The result was that more than eight thousand 16-quart crates were sent to market in Birmingham, Atlanta, Cincinnati, and Chicago. These berries were valued at about \$50,000. More could have been shipped but crates could not be secured in time.- C. A. Mize, County Agent, Tallapoosa, Haralson County.

### Illinois

The Western Illinois Fruit Exchange, a non-stock, non-profit, cooperative association, was organized in this county to market the fruit and vegetables. While this exchange has not been in operation many months, it has many satisfactory results to its credit. Through this association 14 cars of strawberries, which netted the growers approximately 40 cents a crate over the local market, were shipped, and more than 1,200 crates were sold to local buyers. In fact, many of our men estimate that the strawberry crop would have been largely a total loss to the growers had they not been able to market co-operatively. Cherries and raspberries also were sold with very good results. Fifty-one cars of apples were shipped to various markets during the fall months and in addition, 6,800 barrels were placed in storage for the winter market.- F. A. Gougler, County Agent, Quincy, Adams County.

The two units of the Illinois Fruit Growers' Exchange which were organized more than a year ago, fully came up to the expectations of the members and convinced a number of doubters that the organization filled a real need of the growers. The Etherton unit is composed of members living south of Murpheysboro and eastward from there to Carbondale. During the shipping season it was found advantageous to maintain a packing shed at both Carbondale and Etherton. Modern grading machinery was installed at both shipping points. The growers were equipped with modern hauling crates and the grading and packing was done better and more economically than if the fruit had been packed on the respective farms. We are convinced that when hauling crates are used and the fruit is packed and graded at the central station, it will reach the market in better condition than under the old method. The association has cooperated also in the purchase and distribution of baskets and other supplies.- C. J. Thomas, County Agent, Murpheysboro, Jackson County.

### Iowa

This year it was evident that there was a large supply of good clean apples. A survey showed over 1,000 bushels of wealthies. Several of the



growers met to see if they could find a market and to quote prices. A market was found in the Dakotas; so the apples were graded, sorted, and packed in bushel baskets, and Homer Gray of Toledo was sent with a carload of apples, to sell them. After all the expenses had been paid the apples netted the growers 27 cents a bushel, which was a clear profit, since the apples otherwise would have rotted on the ground.- J. W. Pendry, County Agent, Toledo, Tama County.

#### Indiana

The Paoli Fruit Growers' Association is a cooperative organization for buying supplies for the orchard and for selling the fruit. All of the growers tried to grade and pack their fruit in uniform containers. The fruit was loaded in the same car and mostly sold through commission merchants. The chairman of the association kept in close touch by wire with all the leading markets and sold to the highest market. In another year we shall be able to sell f.o.b. Paoli, as we have established a market for the fruit of Orange County. The organization has made a large saving on material, amounting to \$850. It is impossible to estimate the profit made on fruit sold by the organization. I have been able to do demonstration work through the association.- E. E. Stinson, County Agent, Paoli, Orange County.

#### Kentucky

For some time a number of farmers have been interested in the strawberry industry and considerable acreage had been already set out when I came to the county. I assisted in organizing a strawberry association with 38 members in the Calvert City community where the largest number was interested. This association affiliated with the McCracken County Growers' Association and the combined shipment amounted to about 100 crates of strawberries a day. The strawberries were hauled by truck to Paducah and shipped, with the McCracken County berries, to the eastern markets under the trade name, "Aroma berries, Dixie brand." I helped the strawberry growers in every way and I believe there will be a total of 70 acres of strawberries next year. A much better price was secured for the berries through cooperative marketing. One Marshall County grower cleared \$1400 from four acres of strawberries. He paid 80 cents a crate for picking.- R. H. Cottrell, County Agent, Benton, Marshall County.

#### Michigan

In the writer's report last year, a discussion of the sour-cherry-marketing work was given. This matter has been brought to a head and practically solved by the Grand Traverse Packing Company's coming into Benzie County territory. The Grand Traverse Packing Company is a stock company capitalized at \$250,000, of which about \$200,000 has been paid in. When the company came to this county for support it owned a small up-to-date canning factory in Traverse City. By the sale of additional stock, to the amount noted above, the company has constructed the best cold storage plant in Michigan outside of Detroit, has enlarged the capacity of its Traverse City canning plant, and has established cherry-pitting stations at Beulah, in Benzie County, and at Northport in Leelanau County. The writer is the owner of a fruit farm



in this county and thinks, along with many other cherry growers, that our cherry-marketing problems are now solved. In addition to canning cherries, the company is freezing the fresh fruit in 50-gallon barrels. The cherries are washed and pitted at one of the pitting stations, and sealed in 50-gallon barrels. The fruit is then transported by motor trucks to Traverse City and immediately placed in cold storage where it is held at a temperature of 5 degrees below zero for three days. When the whole barrel is a solid mass of frozen cherries it is put into the main storage room, and there held at about 15 degrees Fahrenheit, until it is sold directly to the pie makers, for making pies out of fresh frozen cherries.- J. I. Kraker, County Agent, Beulah, Benzie County.

#### New Jersey

During the past season the Camden Fruit Growers' Cooperative Association has been formed to market cooperatively the peaches of its members. The association is a unit of the New Jersey Fruit Growers' Cooperative Association, which has six units in all. During the early stages of the organization a number of meetings was held in the county agent's office. Agencies cooperating in organizing the fruit association were the State Federation of County Boards of Agriculture and the New Jersey Bureau of Markets. The Camden association built a packing house in Camden and installed machinery suitable for the grading and handling of fruit in carload quantities. The marketing of all fruit was handled by the State association. The Camden association handled 14 cars of peaches a day during the season and a total of 98 cars during the year.- S. F. Foster, County Agent, Haddonfield, Camden County.

#### New York

A cooperative fruit-packing house was established at Phelps. This organization has packed 18,000 barrels of fruit, which will be sold cooperatively through a central association. Two similar organizations, formed in the county two years ago, have packed 53,000 barrels this year. Two other communities have appointed committees to develop packing houses and another community may organize before next fall. The cooperative grape-selling association, organized last year, sold 37 cars of grapes this year at a saving to the growers of between \$3,000 and \$4,000 besides a saving of about \$15 per thousand on the baskets.- R. W. Pease, County Agent, Canandaigua, Ontario County.

The farm bureau arranged 12 meetings and furnished speakers to explain the work of the Central Packing Association. The 12 meetings were held with an attendance of 167, and as a result two new cooperative packing associations were formed. Three others which had organized before but had never packed, began packing this year and shipped through the Central Association. This makes a total of seven packing associations in Wayne County that are shipping through the Western New York Cooperative Packing Association.- E. R. Wagner, County Agent, Sodus, Wayne County.

During the past year two new cooperative fruit-packing houses have been organized. This makes a total of nine in the county that are packing fruit to a high standard and marketing it through their own organizations. Approxi-



mately 200,000 barrels of Orleans County fruit will be marketed this year under "Cataract" brand.- N. C. Chapin, County Agent, Albion, Orleans County.

It is largely through the efforts of the extension specialist in pomology that the fruit-packing association movement has been so successful. Though the associations leaned heavily on the specialist for guidance in the early years of their organization, they are now established and have found their own strength. A central organization is successfully functioning and the local associations are able to turn to it for advice and assistance. The establishment of fruit-packing houses, however, is still an active sub-project and many meetings have been held to discuss the location and arrangement of fruit-packing houses. An important part of this work is being handled by one of the specialists who is employed, during his vacation, by the Central Packing Association for inspection work. Although this can not be credited to the regular extension activities, yet it does meet a number of requests which otherwise would have to be taken care of through the regular extension channels. During the past year this work included the inspection of 25 local packing houses located in 10 of the leading fruit-growing counties of western New York. During a period of three months 12 of these local associations were visited every two or three days. Five packing-house inspections were made in five counties in the Hudson Valley. Thirty individual orchard inspections were made in five counties in western New York. Five meetings, with an attendance of 78, were held with local associations. In the course of the inspection work there was an opportunity of meeting most of the growers who are members of the local associations, and of discussing various orchard problems with them.- G. W. Peck, Assistant Extension Professor of Pomology, New York State College of Agriculture, Cornell University, Ithaca.

### Ohio

Extension specialists in horticulture placed a great deal of emphasis this year on the marketing problem. A party of 65 prominent fruit growers from 19 important orchard-growing counties in the State made an observation tour in the State of New York, visiting central grading and packing houses. Following this tour an organization known as the Ohio Fruit Growers' Cooperative Association was formed. With the assistance of the fruit and vegetable specialist of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, an organization of local associations was undertaken. Seven such associations were formed in the State. A special label, "Buckeye brand," was prepared for use on extra fancy and Ohio "A" grades of apples and peaches. A contract was drawn up with the North American Fruit Exchange through which the crops were to be marketed. The first apples were shipped in late June. About 150 carloads of apples were handled from four associations. The result of this cooperative marketing effort was very satisfactory. The "Buckeye brand" apples sold for approximately \$1 per barrel more than No. 1 grades from the independent growers. "Buckeye brand" peaches sold for about 15 cents per bushel more than No. 1 packs from the independent growers. It is believed further that grading and packing have served to stimulate a new interest on the part of the growers in producing a higher quality of fruit.- H. C. Ramsower, Director of Extension Service, Ohio State University, Columbus.



This county has a unit of the apple growers' association which is putting out the now famous "Buckeye brand." I was fortunate in having men in the county who went ahead on their own initiative and put this across without any help on my part. In another year we hope to have one or two more units in the county, provided they can and will live up to the requirements of the organization. Apples were hauled from the orchards directly to the packing plant and there packed under the supervision of an expert. The tobacco warehouse will be used for this packing plant and I understand the new pool warehouse will be available for this association in the future. Of course, there was a number of details to be worked out which made the going quite slow for a while, but the men in charge believe they have enough experience now to put up a high class pack. The chief difficulty was the lack of space, since all the empty barrels were piled in the warehouse. As a new warehouse (108 by 154 feet) will be added to the present building, the difficulty will be eliminated in another year. The fruit is sold through the North American Fruit Exchange and each grower knows that he will receive f.o.b. Gallipolis. This, to some extent, takes away the gambling chance. Of course each barrel of fruit which goes out under the "Buckeye brand" must be perfect, for the association stands back of it. About 30 carloads of apples were sold through the association this year at an average price of \$4.50 per barrel, which is about \$1.25 per barrel over the outside market in this county."- R. H. Martin, County Agent, Gallipolis, Gallia County.

Although the Ensee and Rome Fruit Growers' Cooperative Associations were established late in 1921, they did not operate before July 1922. This is the first season that apples ever have been marketed from Lawrence County under a manager and labeled, "Buckeye brand." They are sold through a national sales agency, the North American Fruit Exchange, which has a salesman in the county for about three months beginning July 1. Over \$55,000 worth of apples was handled through these cooperative associations. The county agent was assisted in the organization of these associations by F. H. Beach and R. B. Cruickshank, horticulturists, and G. W. Waid, fruit-marketing specialist, of the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation. All the commodity-marketing associations were operated successfully during 1922. Standardized fruit from the local growers brought approximately \$1 per barrel more than the same grade of fruit brought when sold unstandardized.- G. A. Dustman, County Agent, Lawrence County.

### Oregon

The agent's efforts toward the organization of a grape-marketing association were brought to a successful conclusion during the month of October. Shipments by carloads started on the 8th and closed on the 26th, when 18 carloads had been shipped, totaling 18,600 boxes. The entire crop is estimated at 30,000 boxes. What was not shipped in carloads was not entirely outside the association, for some shipments went through before and after the carloads by express. The association shipped 27,000 boxes and those outside, 3,000 boxes.



Saving by cooperative shipment.

Association's first shipments	Cost per box by freight	loading by freight	Total freight cost	Cost by express	Saving
18,600	11¢	3-1/2¢	14-1/2¢	33¢	\$3,348.00

Prior to the organization of the association the entire crop was shipped to the Portland market by express; but of the carload shipments this year, only seven cars remained in Portland, the rest going to other markets and from these being distributed to 56 other northwestern markets. That this method of distribution was responsible for better prices is best told in the words of the growers. E. L. Churchill, secretary of the association and largest individual shipper, says, "The only thing that saved our prices this year in spite of the large crops here, the diversion of the California shipments to the Northwest, and the railroad car situation, was the way our crop was distributed. I honestly believe that it has made a difference of \$1 per box to growers, members and non-members alike." L. W. Carson, pioneer of the grape industry in the county, who with his father has been raising grapes for 46 years, said, "Prices this year are as good as we ever have received and I believe that the association has saved from 75 cents to \$1 per box on this year's crop."

The work this year has accomplished the following:

1. Has taught the value of the cooperation of its members.
2. Has resulted in the saving of \$25,000.
3. Has increased the purchasing power of these farmers and thus aided the community.
4. Has been a great stimulus toward increasing production by better care.
5. Has shown the value of quality produce and the need for packing standards prescribed by law.
6. Has developed a confidence in cooperation so that association shipping will be continued for another year.
7. Has shown the need for rigid inspection of pack at shipping point by disinterested party.- H. B. Howell, County Agent,

Grant's Pass, Josephine County.

West Virginia

The success with which the "Johnny Appleseed brand" has met is very encouraging to the fruit growers; for they realize that in order to meet the competition of the western-packed fruit they must pool their sales and advertise their fruit, and that this is practical only when a large tonnage can be brought together under one name or brand. While at first many looked upon the West Virginia experiment with frank misgivings, it is now a conceded fact that it is entirely feasible to bring the fruit to the control plant for packing and to pool it by variety and grade and sell it as a branded product, and now on every hand one hears the growers talking of the wonderful advantages of this method over the old system of orchard packing. In fact the work at the



West Virginia Community Packing School for 1922 was particularly outstanding for the number of sales of the "Johnny Appleseed brand" as compared with unbranded orchard-packed fruit. With a dull market from the very beginning of the season, most growers found it almost impossible to move their fruit at anything like reasonable prices, and it was a question with even the members of the Inwood Fruit Growers' Club if it would pay them to pack their crop.

In this particular locality, the Northwestern Greening is the first variety of any consequence to be moved. As this is a green apple and the trade demands it before it shows any signs of turning yellow, some of the large growers began to pick their crops as early as August 10; but the market at that time being still overrun with early fruit, these first shipments brought such small returns that their movements were stopped almost as quickly as they were begun. Within just a few days, however, the situation was better. We were advised by our exchange to have the growers start on their Greenings and on August 13 our first car went forward to New York City. The fruit was nicely packed in bushel baskets, ring finished, graded to fancy 3-inch, with a neat two-colored "Johnny Appleseed" label on each basket, and it sold at once at \$1.75 per basket. The remaining cars went at prices ranging from that amount to \$2 per basket. While other growers shipping at the same time have done equally well, there was sufficient difference in favor of the "Johnny Appleseed brand" to induce at least one grower to declare that if the label was worth that much difference he wanted to get the benefit of it. He at once proceeded to get into the club, and put all of his other varieties (about 1,000 barrels) through the plant. In this movement of the latter varieties there was also a preference for the house-packed fruit, which moved freely at what the growers considered fair prices, while orchard-packed apples were hard to sell at any price. - H. W. Prettyman, Horticulturist, College of Agriculture, West Virginia University, Morgantown.

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